

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /053 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8238

INFO AMEMBASY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 9280

BRUSSELS FOR ASST SECRETARY HARTMAN

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: BRANDT'S ATTENDANCE AT SOCIALIST CONGRESS

1. MY GERMAN COLLEAGUE, AMBASSADOR VON LILIENFELD GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING RUNDOWN DECEMBER 7 ON THE VISIT OF WILLY BRANDT AND FRG MINISTER FOR REASEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY MATTHOEOEFER TO MADRID TO ATTEND THE SOCIALIST (PSOE) CONGRESS AND TO MEET WITH THE KING AND PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ, BRANDT AND MATTHOEFER AHD ARRIVED IN MADRID SATURDAY DECEMBER 4, AND DEPARTED EARLY MORNING DECEMBER 7 FOR BONN.

2. OVERALL IMPRESSIONS:

(A) THE BRANDT VISIT HAD BEEN A VERY POSITIVE ONE IN THAT BRANDT HAD URGED MODERATION ON THE PSOE AND THEIR DEFINITE PARTICIAPATION IN THE ELECTIONS. HE HAD ALSO LAID THE GROUND WORK FOR HOPEFULLY UDEFUL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LEFT OPPOSITION. BRANDT AND THE SPD HAD HAD THE IMPRESSION PRIOR TO COMING TO MADRID, THAT THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE OF THE PSOE TOWARD THE REFERENDUM

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AND TOWARD RELATIONS

WITH THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN HAVING AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE
STANDING OF THE PSOE IN SPAIN. HE HAD THEREFORE URGED THE
PSOE TO TAKE A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE TO IMPROVE ITS IMAGE. PKPUIOTH B
RANDT AND MATTHOEFER HAD HAD A FAVORABLE
PRESSION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PSOE CONGRESS
ALTHOUGH THEY HAD HAD A NEGATIVE REACTION TO THE
SPEECHES OF NENNIN WHO HAD DWELT TOO MUCH ON THE PAST AND
THE CIVIL WAR, AND MICHAEL FOOTE WHO HAD MADE A QUOTE HORRIBLE
UNQUOTE SPEECH, BOTH DELEGATES HAD BEEN VERY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY
THE KING AND THE PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ, VON LILIENFELD MENTIONED
THAT MATTHOEFER HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN ONE OF THE STRONGEST CRITICS OF
SPAIN WITHIN THE SPD AND HAD ALSO BEEN VERY NEGATIVE ON THE KING.
HE HAD GONE BACK TO BONN WITH QUITE A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE AND THIS
WOULD
HELP GREATLY IN BRINGING ABOUT A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE IN THE SPD.

3. MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ,
(A) VON LILIENFELD HAD ACCOMPANIED RBANDT AND MATTHOEFER TO THE MEE
TING WITH PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ WHICH LASTED SOMEWHAT OVER AN HOUR.
SUAREZ HAD TALKED FOR ALMOST FIFTY MINUTES AND HAD MADE AN
EXCELLENT IMPRESSION ON THE GERMANS IN TERMS OF HIS OVER ALL
COMMAND OF THE SITUATION, HIS DECISIVENESS, AND HIS PRIENTATION IN
PROPELLING SPAIN TOWARD A MORE DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT.
ON SPECIFIC POINTS, SUAREZ SAID THAT IT NOW APPEARED
THAT GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR THE NEW CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES AND
THE SENATE MIGHT NOW SLIP UNTIL APRIL OR MAY IN ORDER TO ALLOW MORE TIME
FOR NECESSARY PREPARATIONS. SUAREZ WAS OPEN MINDED WITH REGARD TO
NEGOTIATION WITH THE OPPOSITION AND EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS
WITH THEM A BROAD RANGE OF TOPICS INCLUDING THE ELECTORAL LAW.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 9280

BRUSSELS FOR ASST SECRETARY HARTMAN

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(B) WITH REGARD TO LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, SUAREZ INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH HE, AS WELL AS THE KING AND OTHERS, WOULD LIKE TO MOVE NOW TO LEGALIZE THE COMMUNIST PARTY, THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE AT THE PRESENT TIME, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION WITHIN THE ARMY. SUAREZ HAD INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION IN THE ARMY (PARTICULARLY THE MIDDLE GRADE AND JUNIOR OFFICER RANKS) HAD LESSENERED AND HE HAD CITED SOME FIGURES FROM SOME RECENT POLL, IT WAS STILL TOO STRONG TO RISK LEGALIZATION, SUAREZ HAD CITED SOME OF THE USUAL REASONS FOR LEGALIZATION BUT HAD ADDED A NEW TWIST WHICH WAS THAT A LEGALIZED COMMUNIST PARTY WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH A WORSENING ECONOMIC SITUATION IN SPAIN. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION AS TO WHETHER SUAREZ HAD SAID WHETHER HE WOULD BE WILLING TO DEAL WITH A NEGOTIATING GROUP FROM THE LEFT OPPOSITION WHICH INCLUDE THE COMMUNISTS. VON LIENFELD SAID HE HAD NOT, BUT THAT IT WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS IMPRESSION FROM WHAT SUAREZ HAD SAID THAT HE WOULD BE SO WILLING. (ON THE SUBJECT OF LEGALIZATION OF COMMUNISTS BRANDT'S WAS IN FAVOR WHILE MATTHOEFER'S POSITION WAS NEGATIVE. THE LATTER BASED HIS POSITION MAINLY ON TACTICS, THAT IS, NON LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNIST THE PSOE MIGHT PICK UP VOTES WHICH OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE GONE TO THE COMMUNISTS. (C) SUAREZ HAD ALSO SPOKEN ABOUT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WHICH HE HAD CHARACTERIZED AS SERIOUS. BUT HE HAD NOT INDICATED THAT HE HAD ANY PROGRAM IN MIND AT THIS TIME TO TRY TO DEAL WITH IT.

4. MEETING WITH THE KING: THIS MEETING HAD GONE VERY WELL AND HAD BEEN A RELAXED ONE WITH THE KING AND BRANDT GETTING ALONG VERY WELL. BRANDT HAD BEEN VERY POSITIVE WITH THE KING AND HAD EXPRESSED HIS QUOTE ADMIRATION UNQUOTE FOR EVERYTHING THE KING HAS DONE TO MOVE SPAIN TOWARDS DEMOCRACY. THE

KING HAD EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION TO BRANDT FOR HIS SUPPORT AND FOR HIS EFFORTS TO URGE THE PSOE TO FOLLOW A MORE MODERATE LINE. VON LIENFELD FELT THAT THE KING WAS SOMEWHAT LESS NEGATIVE ON THE PSOE THAN HE HAS BEEN IN THE RECENT PAST. THE KING HAD EXPLAINED TO BRANDT THAT HE WANTED ULTIMATELY TO BE A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCH AND INDEED THE KING OF ALL THE SPANISH. HOWEVER, HE CANNOT DO IT NOW SINCE HE MUST HELP PRVE THE DIRECTION AND IMPETUS FOR THE REFORM PROGRAM DRAWING ONHIS OWN CPAITAL OF POPULARITY WITHIN SPAIN. HE HAD TOLD BRANDT THAT HE HAD TAKEN A RISK IN REMOVING ARIAS LAST JULY AND HAD BEEN EXTREMELY WORRIED THE WAY MATTERS HAD DEVELOPED IMMEDIATELY AFTER. HOWEVER, HE IS FULLY SATISFIED HE MADE THE RIGHT DECISION AND THAT SUAREZ IS DOING AN EXCELLENT JOB. HE WORKS VERY CLOSELY WITH HIM AND FULLY SUPPORTS HIS EFFORTS. HE RECONGINIZED THAT MANY SERIOUS PROBLEMS LAY AHEAD AND HAD NO ILLUSION THAT HIS TASK WAS EASY. THE KING HAD ALSO SPOKEN ABOUT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS VERY BAD. HE HAD FGONE CONSIDERABLY FURTHER THAN SUEAREZ IN DICATING THAT HE FELT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS TO TRY TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION. HE SAID HE PLANNED TO SPEAK TO SUAREZ ALONG THESE LINES.

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5. THE KING'S VISIT TO BONN. VON LILIENFELD SAID THAT HE WAS STILL URGING BONN TO ISSUE AN INVITATION TO THE KING TO VISIT THE FRG PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. WHILE HE RECEIVED AGREEMENT IN PRINICPLE FROM BONN FOR A VISIT, HE STILL HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET A FORMAL INVITATION. THERE SEEMED TO BE CONTINUING HESITATION IN BONN AND THIS IS PART MIGHT BE DUE TO POLITICAL PARALYSIS NOW EXISTING THERE. THEN HE HOPED HOWEVER THAT THE VISIT OF BRANDT AND MATTHOEFER WOULD NOW MOVE MATTERS FORWARD (AND WE NOTE IN THEIS CONNECTION THAT NRANDT ON RETURNING TO BONN STATED PUBLICLY THAT THE KING WOULD VISIT THE FRG NEXT SPRING. STABLER

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